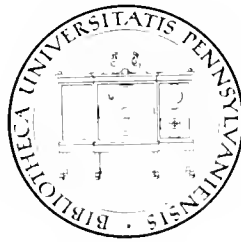


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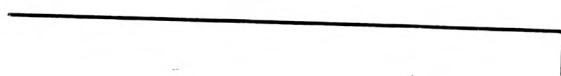
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THE  
PRIOR TO 1800.

BY

PHILADELPHIA .

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## INTRODUCTION.

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**T**HIS lecture was prepared for delivery before the Young Men's Hebrew Association of Philadelphia, on November 24th, 1883. At the time I had no idea of printing it, but was induced so to do by a number of friends who did not have an opportunity to hear it.

I want to acknowledge the very great help that I received from Mr. Westcott's very full "History of Philadelphia."

H. P. R.

*Philadelphia, May, 1883.*



# THE JEWS IN PHILADELPHIA, PRIOR TO 1800.

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THE early history of Philadelphia is so very meagre in relation to the Jewish people and Church, that it is next to impossible to glean many accurate facts concerning them before the opening of the Revolutionary War.

While there is a tradition that there were Jews in Pennsylvania or the Pennsylvania country before the landing of William Penn, the first documentary evidence that can be found, of any person of that faith living in Philadelphia, is in a special act, passed in January, 1726, allowing Arnold Bamberger, among others, to hold lands and to trade in the province. The first assembly of the Jews in

the shape of a religious congregation in Philadelphia, is believed to have been as early as 1747, when the congregation then or afterwards called "Mickve Israel" is said to have been founded.

This belief is strengthened by the following extract from a letter from Jacob Henry, in New York, to Barnard Gratz, in Philadelphia, bearing date "New York, January 6th, 1761": "I am told there is great and mighty news with you in Philadelphia; that a building of a synagogue is actually resolved on, and, according to my intelligence, is said to be put in execution with the utmost vigor. This is news. I could hardly have thought, seven months ago, that the same would be talked of this twenty-four years to come, though it convinces me that eternity is nigh at hand; for I myself have been very nigh eternity twice since my absence from you. Pray, Barnard, if your time permits (which I make no doubt your time of the year), let me know who is the head of this grand undertaking, with a short sketch of the plan,—whether the synagogue will be Hambro, Pragg or Poland fation. For my part, I think it will be best after the old mode of Pennsylvania. The same seemingly suits everybody. The expenses are not great, for the Rev. Mordecai Yarnall

serves without fee or reward; and if you get a new-fation Mordecai he will expect great things for nothing. But, to shorten this long epistle, I wish you may go threw this good work, and myself the pleasure to see it build."

Mr. Westcott, in his "History of Philadelphia," says, in relation to the Rev. Mordecai Yarnall: "From the words of the letter, it might seem that Mordecai Yarnall was the name of the reader of the Congregation; but at that time there was living in Philadelphia a man of that name, a member of the Society of Friends, and a minister. It is a matter for inference whether this person was so much interested in the welfare of the Jews as to lead to a jesting allusion, or whether there was a Jewish reader by that name." After long and patient search, but one Mordecai Yarnall can be found living in Philadelphia at that time, and he is the Quaker just spoken of.

Whatever might have been the desire for building a synagogue at this time, the enterprise was not accomplished, and Mr. Henry's words, that in his opinion twenty-four years would be necessary to

bring about so great an improvement, were not far wide of the mark.

During the period, 1747-75, the Congregation is believed to have worshipped in a small house in Sterling Alley, which ran from Cherry to Race Streets, between Third and Fourth. Before this, however, the burying-ground situate on Spruce Street, between Eighth and Ninth, and now belonging to the Congregation Mickve Israel, was in the hands of the Levy family; for in a letter of Richard Peters, Secretary to the Proprietaries, dated February 17th, 1747, he writes: "On the 20th of September, 1738, there was laid out by Mr. Thomas Penn, for a burying-place of Mr. Nathan Levy and family, the quantity of sixty foot in front on the north side of Spruce Street, between Eighth and Ninth Streets, the east side thereof being two hundred and forty feet west from the west side of Eighth Street. It is about fifty feet distant from Spruce [it is supposed he meant Ninth], Mrs. Levy being buried there and some other of the family since. Mr. Levy now desires the Proprietaries will grant him a patent to include the ground within the wooden enclosure and a ten-foot alley from Spruce Street, of such breadth as you please. The ground is full small;

but, as I know it is not agreeable to you to part with any ground in the city, I shall put Mr. Levy off from desiring an enlargement. You will be pleased to mention the terms or quit-rent to be reserved in the patent." In 1751, the following notice appeared in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*: "Whereas, many unthinking people have been in the habit of setting up marks, and fired several shots against the fence of the Jews' burying-ground, which not only destroyed said fence, but also a tombstone in it, there being a brick wall erected, I must desire the sportsmen to forbear (for the future,) firing against said wall. If they do, whoever will inform, so that the offender be convicted thereof before a magistrate, shall have twenty shillings' reward paid by me.

" NATHAN LEVY.

" *Philadelphia, September, 1751.*"

This property came into the possession of the Congregation Mickve Israel through gift of the Levy family. Mr. Michael Gratz was afterward deputed to buy all the ground, "unstaked lands," to the corner of Ninth Street, and the title-deeds of this acquisition were made out in Mr. Gratz's name, although the Congregation paid for the property; and in after years, when this graveyard was newly

laid out, sixty feet were reserved for the Gratz family, under the mistaken impression that Michael Gratz had presented them with a portion of the ground.

From Westcott's history I quote the following reminiscences of a member of the Jewish persuasion, who died some years ago, at an advanced age: "Among the leading members of the Congregation at this early period was Jonas Phillips, who was the presiding officer in all church affairs. He was the father of Naphthali Phillips, Esq., of New York, and grandfather of Henry M. Phillips, Esq., of Philadelphia. The persecution of the Jews in Spain in the last century was at times so dreadful that many of them stealthily left the country with only their clothes on their backs, as none of the property could be taken or carried away by them; fortunately, however, Mr. Phillips's grandmother (named Nuñas,) and some twenty-eight of her family connections succeeded in saving enough to carry them from Lisbon to London (then a six months' voyage), when the great-grandmother's body was consigned to the deep before reaching the port of Savannah. His grandmother came on to New York, where, after a short period, she was married



to the Rev. David Menden Mostrado, in 1747. Mr. Phillips's mother was born in New York, and was married in Reading, Pennsylvania, in 1762. Another member of the Congregation was David Franks, a son of Jacob Franks, a prominent merchant of New York. David Franks afterward left the Jewish faith. By untiring industry, he accumulated great wealth, and by adhering to the British or loyal cause his property was confiscated, and he became poor in his old age. Among the earlier inhabitants of the Jewish faith were Barnard and Michael Gratz. The Messrs. Gratz were eminent and successful merchants." According to Mr. Gratz Van Rensselaer, they took their name from the town of Grätz in Styria, Austria; some think the name came from Grätz in Posen.

The David Franks just spoken of was, as has already been stated, the son of Jacob Franks, of New York. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* of January 26th, 1769, in its letter from New York, said: "Last Monday evening, died Mr. Jacob Franks, for many years an eminent merchant of this city, a gentleman of amiable character. . . . On Tuesday, his remains were decently interred in the Jews' burying-place, attended by a great number of his friends."

David Franks was quite a prominent citizen of Philadelphia, both socially and in business. He was a member of the Mount Regale Fishing Company, which met at Peter Robinson's tavern, at the Falls of Schuylkill, where fisheries were in full operation. Mr. Westcott remarks "that the members were all persons of wealth and fashion, the leaders of society at that day. The Mount Regale Company was doubtless very select in its associations." He and Samson Levy were subscribers to the first Assembly ball in 1758, the subscription for which was forty shillings. A Mrs. Marks was one of the belles of the ball. He (Franks,) lived during the Revolution in the Logan mansion, at the northwest corner of Second Street and Lodge Alley, now called Gothic Street. It was erected between 1750 and 1760,—a fine, large, double house, which was as stately as any building of the kind at that time in Philadelphia.

He signed an agreement to take the colonial paper currency issued before the Declaration of Independence, and sanctioned by the King, in lieu of gold and silver. The other Jewish signers were Barnard Soliman, Jacob Mayer, Ben Mayers, Israel Jacobs, Joseph Solomon Kohn, Solomon Aaron,

Moses Mordecai, Johannes Franks and Solomon Marache.

On November 7th, 1765, he entered into an agreement with other merchants not to import any more goods until the repeal of the Stamp Act. This paper was also signed by Benjamin Levy, Samson Levy, Joseph Jacobs, Hyman Levy, Jr., Moses Mordecai, Michael and Barnard Gratz.

David Franks married, in December, 1743, Margaret, daughter of Peter Evans, Esq., of Philadelphia, who was born in 1720 and died September 28th, 1780, and was buried in Christ churchyard. They had issue:

*Abigail*, born in 1744-5, who married Andrew Hamilton, of "The Woodlands," on the 6th of January, 1768. Mr. Hamilton, whose house was considered the handsomest rural residence in Philadelphia, was at one time the Attorney-General of the State.

*Jacob*, born January, 1746-7.

*Mary*, or *Polly*, born January 25th, 1747-8; died August 26th, 1774; buried in Christ churchyard.

*Rebecca*, born in 1760; married, in 1782, Lieutenant-Colonel, afterwards General, Sir Henry Johnson, G. C. B.; died in 1823.

Miss Rebecca Franks was one of the greatest belles of her time in our city. The "Meschianza" was a gorgeous fête given to General Howe before his departure from Philadelphia in 1778, and at which Major André was a presiding genius. The day commenced with a water procession on the Delaware, after which a tournament was held, where England's bravest soldiers appeared in honor of Philadelphia's fairest women. The opponents were divided into two parties,—the one the "Knights of the Blended Rose," the other the "Knights of the Burning Mountain." The chieftain of the former, Lord Cathcart, appeared in honor of Miss Auchmuty; the chieftain of the latter, Captain Watson, appeared in honor of Miss Franks. Miss Franks was dressed in a white silk gown, trimmed with black and white sashes, edged with black. It was a polonaise dress, which formed a flowing robe and was open in front to the waist. The sash, six inches wide, was filled with spangles; also the veil, which was edged with silver lace. The head-dress was towering, in the fashion of the time, and filled with a profusion of pearls and jewels. She and Miss Auchmuty were crowned "Queens of Beauty."

David Franks's sister, Fila, or Phila, married General Oliver DeLancey, who soon after the breaking out of the Revolutionary War accepted a commission in the British army, having previously commanded a New York regiment during the war with France. David S. Franks, a celebrated officer of the Continental army, was a nephew of David Franks. Westcott, in his "History," calls Fila, or Phila, the eldest daughter of David Franks. He also says that Mary, or Polly, whom he calls the youngest daughter, was at the "Meschianza;" but, as the latter was dead before the fête was held, it is hardly likely that she could be present, unless in spirit. Franks was commissary of the British prisoners during the early part of the Revolution, was suspected of secretly leaning toward the British cause, was deprived of his office in 1778, and, on October 3d, 1780, he, with two other persons, was arrested and imprisoned. Franks was afterwards released, on giving security for two hundred thousand pounds sterling, to go within the enemy's lines and stay there. His property in Philadelphia was confiscated. Mrs. Ellet tells the story of Rebecca, "that, at a splendid ball given by the British officers to the ladies of New York, during an interval of dancing Sir Henry Clinton, previously engaged in conversation with Miss

Franks, called out to the musicians: ‘Give us “Britons, Strike Home!”’ ‘The Commander-in-Chief,’ she exclaimed, ‘has made a mistake; he meant to say: “Britons, go home.”’

The small Jewish congregation, which for some years before the Revolutionary War had met in the little house in Sterling Alley, remained there when the trouble with England became serious. The congregation was humble and the members poor, as the following minute from the proceedings in 1773 will show. “At a meeting of the *Mahomad*, Kahal Kadosh Mickve Israel, this twenty-eighth day of Shebat, 5533,—present Barnard Gratz, *parnass*; Mr. Solomon Marache, *gabay*; Mr. Michael Gratz, Mr. Henry Marks, Mr. Levi Marks, Mr. Moses Mordecai, Mr. Mordecai Levy and Mr. Levi Solomon,—it was resolved unanimously, that, in order to support our holy worship and establish it on a more solid foundation than it is at present, we, the undersigned, do mutually agree and promise to pay annually to the *parnass* or *gabay* for the time being the several sums annexed to our names, which shall be paid in equal quarterly payments; and it is understood that the subscription is to last for the term of three years

from this date, which money is to be appropriated for the use of the synagogue and charitable uses now established in the city of Philadelphia, province of Pennsylvania. As witness our hands, this twenty-second day of February, one thousand, seven hundred and seventy-three, in the thirteenth year of His Majesty's reign: Barnard Gratz, *parnass*, £10 per annum; Levi Marks, £10; Solomon Marache, £5; Levi Solomon, £4; Mordecai Levy, £3."

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At the breaking out of hostilities, the principal Jews of the city of New York, being strong Whigs, were driven out by the occupation of the British army. Many of them came to Philadelphia, and increased the number of the Congregation. The membership became too great for accommodation in Sterling Alley, and new quarters were sought. They hired a three-story brick house, belonging to Mr. Joseph Cauffman, in Cherry Alley, between Third and Fourth Streets, on the south side, nearly opposite Sterling Alley. The building is believed to be the same for many years known as the Golden Fleece Tavern. In the large room in the second story of the building, the synagogue was accommodated and the proper fixtures and conveniences introduced.

Among the Jews who came from New York was Rev. Ger. or Gershom, Mendez Israel Seixas. He was a rabbi and teacher, well educated, and a man of influence and eloquence. He officiated in New York, at Mill Street Synagogue, from the year 1766, at which time he took charge of the Congregation, being then but a little over twenty-one years of age.

Mr. Seixas soon attracted an addition to the Congregation, so that the upper-room synagogue of Cauffman's house became overcrowded, and measures were considered necessary for obtaining a new place of worship. In March, 1782, the Jewish congregation was worshipping in the house of Cauffman, and received notice to quit the premises.

Barnard Gratz and Solomon M. Cohen were appointed a committee to purchase or hire a proper place of worship. They soon afterward reported that they had agreed to buy a house in Sterling Alley for that purpose,—probably the house originally used for worship before the Revolution. A subscription was taken up. A committee was appointed to conduct the affairs of the Congregation, and to fit up and prepare the house for a synagogue. It consisted of Isaac Moses, Haym Levy, Solomon M. Cohen,



Simon Nathan, Barnard Gratz and Jonas Phillips. Upon consideration, this committee formed the opinion that the fitting up and repairing of the house would be too costly, and would amount to nearly as much as building a new one. The estimate for the latter was six hundred pounds sterling, and the subscription being short Haym Solomon agreed to pay one-fourth the cost, whatever it might be. It was therefore determined to sell the house in Sterling Alley. A lot of ground was bought of Robert Parrish and Henry Hill, in Cherry Street, west of Third, north side.

Here the Congregation proceeded to construct a plain building for a synagogue, with a house adjacent on the rear of the lot for the *hazan*, or reader. A committee consisting of Jonas Phillips, president, Solomon Marache, Simon Nathan, Haym Levy, Isaac Moses and Solomon M. Cohen, with Benj. Siexas, treasurer, was appointed to prepare rules for the dedication service. On the 13th of September, 1782, the synagogue being ready for use, it was solemnly dedicated by the Rev. Gershom Siexas and the Congregation, according to the ancient forms. The first notice we have been able to find in reference to the

building, is in the “Pennsylvania Archives and Colonial Record.”

In the latter, under date of September 12th, 1782, is the following: “An address from the president and others representing the Congregation in this city, praying the countenance and protection of the President and Council of Pennsylvania in their design of erecting a place of public worship in this city, was this day received, which, being read, was ordered to be filed.” The “Archives” contain the memorial. It shows that at the time it was presented the synagogue had been completed, and was to be dedicated the next day,—September 13th, 1782.

The following is a copy of this interesting document:

➤ “The President and Representatives of the Jewish Congregation in this city humbly beg leave to approach His Excellency the President, His Honour the Vice-President, and the Honourable the Executive Council of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Congregation Mickve Israel (Israelites), in this city, have erected a place of public worship, which they intend to consecrate to the service of the Almighty to-morrow afternoon; and, as they have ever professed themselves liege subjects of the United States of America, and have always acted agreeably

thereto, they humbly crave the protection and countenance of the chief magistrates in the State to give sanction to their design, and will deem themselves highly honored by their presence in the synagogue, whenever they judge proper to favor them. The doors will be opened at three o'clock, and the service will continue till seven. The uncertainty of the day of consecration was the sole cause of having delayed this matter, but we earnestly hope it will not be thought too late. With prayers to the God of Israel for the safety of the United States in general and this Commonwealth in particular, we are, gentlemen, most respectfully and most devotedly, in behalf of the Congregation, Jonas Phillips, president; Michael Gratz, Solomon Marache, Solm. Meyers Cohen, Simon Nathan. [Indorsed] 1782, September 12th. From the President and others representing the Congregation of Jews in the city. Their address to the President and Council. Read in Council, and ordered to be filed."

According to the notice, the synagogue was to have been dedicated September 13th; but in a longer paper, in the writing of Haym Solomon, it is said distinctly that the dedication was on September 17th, 1782. It has been positively settled, however,

that the opening and dedication of the synagogue did take place on the 13th of September.

The members of the Congregation at this time were as follows: Isaiah Bush, Abraham Barrias, Abraham Van Etting, Mayer Solomon, Mayer M. Cohen, Sol. Cohen, Isaac Da Costa, Nunes from the Capes, Samuel Da Costa, Mayer Daiklain, Samuel De Lucena, Barnard Gratz, Michael Gratz, Moses Gomez, Daniel Gomez, Phillip Moses, Samuel Hays, Jacob Hart, Manuel Josephson, Barnueb S. Judah, Isaac Judah, Israel Jacobs, Abraham Levy, Hagima Levy, Isaac H. Levy, Solomon Levy, Jacob Cohen, Ezekiel Levy, Jacob Levy, Henry Marks, Isaac Moses, Solomon Marache, Moses H. Myers, Abm. Henriquez, Joseph Solomon, Isaac Da Costa, Jr., Isaac Madeira, Joseph Madeira, Solomon Marks, Isaac Moses, Sr., Eliczer Sey, Zedak Dormisted, Simon Nathan, Lyon Nathan, Moses Judah, Moses Nathan, Joseph Abandonon, Aaron Levy, Jonas Phillips, Cushman Polock, Samuel Alexander, Gershom Seysius, Benjamin Seysius, Haym Solomon, Mordecai Sheftal, Sheftal Sheftal, Barendt Spitzer, Moses B. Franks, Joseph Simons, Michael Marks, Jacob Mordecai, Mordecai M. Mordecai, Jacob Myers, Benjamin Nones, Asher Myers, Moses A. Myers,

Abraham Sasportes, Judah Myers, Joseph A. Myers, Abraham Seixas, Mordecai Levy, Michael Hart, Naphtali Phillips, Naim Van Ishac, Naphtali Hart, Lazarus Barnet, Levi Solomon, Joseph Henry, Isaac Abrahams, Myer Hart, Judah Aaron, Solomon Aaron, Isaac Cardoza, Manuel Myers, Colonoms Van Shelemah, David Bash, Reuben Etting, Samuel Israel, Joseph Carpelles, Moses Homberg, Moses Jacobs, Solomon Etting, Moses Nathan, Marcus Elkin, Meyer Hart and Sons, Solomon M. Myers, Samuel Lazarus, Phillip Russell, Jacob Cohen, Ephraim Hart, Henry Noah and Levy Phillips.

Barnard and Michael Gratz were merchants, and lived in 1791 at 107 Sassafras Street. Simon Gratz in two purchases—the first in 1798, and the second in 1802,—bought the house, at the southwest corner of Seventh and Market Streets, in which Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence. Manuel Josephson was a merchant, at No. 144 High Street. He was buried in the old Spruce Street graveyard, and his tombstone says that he died on the “30th of February, 1796.” The *Philadelphia Minerva* for February 6th, 1796, however, contains the following notice: “Departed this life, on the 30th of January, Mr. Manuel Josephson, in the sixty-seventh year of

his age." Complimentary remarks testifying to the worth of the deceased follow, and it was said that he was skilled in various languages. Israel Jacobs was a store-keeper, at No. 52 North Second Street; in October, 1771, he was elected one of a committee to represent the county of Philadelphia in the Assembly.

Jacob Cohen was also a store-keeper, at No. 54 Crown Street. Solomon Marache was of the firm of Marache & Spencer, large importing merchants, corner of Second and Race Streets. Moses Nathan, shop-keeper, No. 12 South Second Street. Jonas Phillips, 110 North Second Street, married Rebecca Machada, the daughter of *Hazan* Machada, and a New Yorker by birth. She was born November 17th, 1746, and died June 21st, 1831. Naphtali Phillips, their son, was born October 19th, 1773. Zalegman Phillips, another son, was born at (old,) No. 82 Chestnut Street; on June 28th, 1779, he married Arabella, daughter of Mr. M. Solomon, who was born May 21st, 1786, and died December 3d, 1824. He belonged to the old school of lawyers, and for many years after the fashion had ceased, and until the day of his death, which occurred August 2d, 1839, wore a queue. He was an able criminal lawyer, and had a large run of business; one of the last

cases he was engaged in which attracted public attention, was the prosecution against Dr. Dyott, in which he appeared for the defendant. Isaac Moses signed a paper in June, 1780, agreeing to take State paper money of the issue of March, 1780, as gold and silver. He also subscribed three thousand pounds sterling to the Bank of Pennsylvania, for the purpose of supplying the Army of the United States with provisions for two months. Each subscriber gave his bond to the directors of the Bank for such sums as he thought proper, binding himself to the payment thereof in specie, in case such payment should become necessary, to fulfil the engagements and discharge the notes or contracts of the Bank. Samuel Hays was one of the original subscribers to the old Chestnut Street Theatre, in 1792.

The Levy family were all well to do. Moses Levy sold the house, No. 104 (now 308,) Chestnut Street, to the first bank in the United States (the Bank of North America), for ten thousand dollars. He had his office at No. 311 Chestnut Street, and was a well-known lawyer. He was Recorder of the city from 1802 to 1808, and subsequently President Judge of the District Court. Mr. Levy stood high in his profession; he lived on the spot where the

Washington House now stands, on Chestnut Street, below Eighth; he was a brother of Sampson Levy, who lived in 1809 at old No. 68, now 228, Chestnut Street, and who was a character in his time. Mr. Levy was born in 1761, and adopted the law as his profession. After obtaining a rather superficial knowledge of legal business in the office of his brother Moses, he commenced the practice of law and soon blundered into lucrative employment. Mr. Levy was very polite and courteous, and he never stopped to assure himself that he understood the merits of the case before he plunged head over ears into it, and compensated by his ready wit and glib tongue for his lack of knowledge of his case and of the legal principles involved in it. Mr. Levy was fluent in speech, but his words tumbled promiscuously over each other, and strung themselves together without any regard for fitness. But it was all the same to our worthy counsellor, who cared nothing for the opinion of his brother lawyers, so that he accomplished his object with the jury and gained the cause of his client. David Paul Brown, in his "Forum," says, regarding Mr. Levy's speeches: "His off-hand speeches were perfect gems. There never was anything like them. They flashed, sparkled and coruscated in every direction but that of



the cause; and sometimes, from his diffusive and erratic course, he would, when he could not help it, touch for a moment, but only a moment, the essential points in controversy." Mr. Levy's peculiarities were such as to make him popular, and he enjoyed the title of "the Samson of the bar." His practice was quite profitable for a number of years. The eccentric counsellor was very fond of literary society, although he was by no means a literary man, himself. Upon one occasion, he was invited to dine with Judge Tilghman, to meet an eminent English *littérateur*. The Englishman was very pedantic, and, by talking only upon subjects with which he was himself most familiar, he managed to monopolize the conversation. This did not suit our little lawyer, who loved to have his own say, and he finally brought the pedant to a sense of politeness by demanding: "Pray, Mr. ———, did you ever meet with a little book called 'McNally on Evidence'?" Mr. Levy became a convert to the Protestant Episcopal Church, in which faith he died on the 15th of December, 1831.

Benjamin Nones, at No. 22 Chestnut Street, from 1806 to 1824, was a notary public and sworn interpreter of all languages. He was a Frenchman by

birth, and universally esteemed as a good man and worthy citizen. He was a warm Jeffersonian Democrat, and never failed to turn out in the primary elections, in the days when Democracy was at a discount in Walnut Ward. Mr. Nones had some eccentricities, among which was a dislike for sneezing in-doors. When he had occasion to sneeze, he would step out upon the curbstone in front of his house, and let off a series of vigorous discharges in that way which were wont to awaken the echoes of Chestnut Street. Mr. Nones had served his adopted country in the Revolutionary War; and, as he was always an ardent patriot, of course had the right to sneeze when and where he pleased.

In February, 1778, Enoch Story, inspector of prohibited goods, published Barnard Solomon for having sold rum in small quantities, despite the regulations. Solomon absconded. Five guineas were offered for his apprehension and return. In 1760, Levy Marks, the tailor, put a large sign of a Prussian hussar outside his shop, and in 1765 changed it to a gentleman and lady. His brother Henry, in the same year, had the sign of a blue bonnet before his starch-making establishment, Chestnut Street, between Front and Second.

In the year 1800, the following advertisement was to be seen in the newspapers: "No PUFF.—‘A friend in need is a friend, indeed.’ The subscriber, having experienced the gratification of this when meeting a friend in distress, urged by sympathy and philanthropy to the public in general, and to himself in particular, takes this method of informing his friends that on application at his office, nearly opposite the Bank of Pennsylvania, they can be accommodated with monies of any kind. A. CONEX, 115 Chestnut Street." A. stands for Abraham.

Cushman Pollock was a young man from Amsterdam. Aaron Levy and Israel Israel (the latter will be spoken of at some length,) lent very large sums to Robert Morris, for the purpose of carrying on the Revolutionary War.

And last, but most important, comes Mr. Haym Solomon, a broker and banker, who was a very valuable citizen. He was a native of Poland, and had come to America before the Revolution. He was in New York when the British took possession, was arrested at an early date with other obnoxious patriots, and was confined in a loathsome cell, called the "Prévôt." He subsequently escaped, and came

to Philadelphia. "Here he gave very important assistance to the Government, aiding the public treasury by frequent loans of money, and advancing liberally of his means to sustain the struggle for independence, at a time when the sinews of war were essential to success." These are the words of a committee of the United States Senate in 1850. Solomon was the negotiator of all the war securities obtained from France and Holland, which he indorsed and sold in bills to the merchants in America, at a credit of two or three months, on his own personal security, without the loss of a cent to the country. He received only a commission of one-fourth of one per cent., while others received large *douceurs*.

He was banker of the French Government on the accession of M. de la Luzerne, and through his hand passed one hundred and fifty millions of livres. Among the men he assisted were Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Arthur Lee, Baron Steuben, General Mifflin, General St. Clair, Colonel Bland, J. F. Mercer, Joseph Jones (uncle to James Monroe), James Wilson and Robert Morris. Henry Wheaton says that Judge Wilson, so distinguished for his labors in the convention that formed the

Federal Constitution, would have retired from public service, if he had not been sustained by the timely aid of Haym Solomon, administered with equal generosity and delicacy. He supported Don Francisco Rendon, Minister from Spain to the United States, for two years from his own private purse. He lent money without hope of return to Roquebrune, La Forêt, Holker, Barbé Marbois, La Luzerne, and other foreign Ministers. Mr. Madison, addressing his colleagues, Messrs. Randolph and Jones, while he was in the Revolutionary Congress, 1780-3, said: “1. The expediency of drawing bills on funds in Virginia, even the most unquestionable, has been tried by us; but in vain. 2. I am fast relapsing into pecuniary distress. The cause of my brethren is equally alarming. 3. I have been a pensioner for some time on the favor of Mr. Haym Solomon. 4. I am almost ashamed to reiterate my wants so incessantly to you. The kindness of our friend in Front Street, near the coffee-house (Haym Solomon), is a fund that will preserve me from extremities; but I never resort to it without great mortification, as he obstinately rejects all recompense. To necessitous delegates, he always spares them supplies.”

At the time of his death, early in 1784, it is claimed that the United States were indebted to Solomon in at least three hundred thousand dollars for advances to Ministers and agents of foreign Governments for the use of the United States. The committee of the United States Senate agreed that this debt was a just one, and reported a bill in 1850 for the payment of the amount, with interest, to the heirs of Haym Solomon. "Republics are not only ungrateful, but sometimes dishonest." The claim was too large to be conveniently paid, and therefore it was postponed and the consideration of it obstructed until all hope of obtaining it died out.

The synagogue was a plain, neat building, having about thirty-six feet front, one story in height, and stood a little back from Cherry Street. It was nearly square, and would seat from one hundred and seventy-five to two hundred people. In the rear of the synagogue was built a snug house, as a residence or parsonage for the use of the minister; and the entrance to this was by an alley or passage on the east side of the synagogue.

In a year after the church was built, the Jews for the first time appeared as an organized body in

any public proceeding. On the 23d of December, 1783, the minister, Gersom Mendes Israel Seixas, of the Jewish Synagogue of Philadelphia; Simon Nathan, the *parnass*, or president; Asher Myers, Barnard Gratz and Haym Solomon, the *mahamad*, or associates of the council, in behalf of themselves and brethren, addressed the Council of Censors in relation to the declaration required to be taken by each member of the Assembly, which affirmed that "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by divine inspiration," and also in relation to that part of the Constitution which declared that "no other test should be required of any other civil magistrate in the State." They represented that these provisions deprived them of the right of ever becoming representatives. They did not covet office, they said; but they thought the provision improper, and an injustice to the members of a persuasion that had always been attached to the American cause, and had given support to the country, some in the Continental army, some in the militia, and some by willingly paying taxes and cheerfully sustaining the popular cause. This memorial appeared to have no immediate effect; but it doubtless, from its moderate and manly tone, had

its influence in procuring the modification of the test clause in the Constitution.

After the close of the Revolutionary War, Mr. Seixas returned to New York, where he remained until his death, which occurred in 1816, he being all the time in charge of the congregation in that city. He was succeeded in Philadelphia by the Rev. Jacob Raphael Cohen. Mr. Cohen was an Englishman by birth, who had emigrated to Toronto, Quebec, and thence went to New York. He was elected *hazan*, or minister, shortly after Mr. Seixas's departure. He remained in charge of the Congregation until his death, which occurred in 1810.

The Congregation, after the synagogue was finished, remained some time in debt. On the 27th of February, 1788, application was made to the General Assembly of Pennsylvania for permission to set up a lottery to pay the amount due on the synagogue building. No action was taken upon it at the time. The Congregation then issued the following general appeal to citizens of all sects: "Whereas, the religious order of men in this city denominated Jews were without any synagogue or



place of worship until the year 1780, when, desirous of accommodating themselves, and encouraged thereto by a number of respectable and worthy brethren of the Hebrew tribe then in this place (who generously contributed to the design), they purchased a lot of ground and erected thereon the buildings necessary and proper for their religious worship; and whereas many of their number at the close of the late war returned to New York, Charlestown, and elsewhere, their homes (which they had been exiled from and obliged to leave, on account of their attachment to American measures), leaving the remaining few of their religion here burdened with a considerable charge, consequent from so great an undertaking; and whereas the present Congregation, after expending all subscriptions, loans, gifts, etc., made the society by themselves, the generous patrons of their religious intentions, to the amount of at least twenty-two hundred pounds sterling, were obliged to borrow money to finish this building, and to contract other debts that are now not only pressingly claimed, but a judgment is actually against their improvements, and which must be sold, unless they are immediately enabled to pay the sum of about eight hundred pounds sterling, which from a variety of delicate and distress-

ing causes they are wholly unable to raise among themselves: they are therefore under the necessity of earnestly soliciting from their worthy fellow-citizens, of every religious denomination, their benevolent aid and help, flattering themselves that their worshipping Almighty God in a way and manner different from other religious societies will never deter the enlightened citizens of Philadelphia from generously subscribing towards the preservation of a religious house of worship. The subscription-paper will be enrolled in the archives of the Congregation, that their posterity may know and gratefully remember the liberal support of their religious society.—Philadelphia, April, 1788.”

That the means of the Congregation at this time were not abundant, and that the minister was sustained by subscription, the following minute of a meeting held Sunday, 4th Tamuz, 5549 (June 28th, 1789), will show: “Mr. B. Gratz, *segan*, acquainted the meeting that he had received a note from Mr. Jacob Cohen, *hazan*, informing him that the time for which he (Cohen,) stood engaged to the Congregation for *shochet* and *hazan*, and for which a subscription had been opened last year, had expired on Wednesday last, being the first day of *Rosh Hodesh*

Tamuz; and he wishes to know if the Congregation desires to engage him on the like terms for the ensuing year. The question having been put, all the members, except one, agreed that the last year's subscription ought to be continued, and each for themselves did subscribe the respective sums they had subscribed last year, on condition that each subscriber on last year's subscription-list should do the same. Otherwise, they would not consider themselves bound by their subscriptions this day, thinking it unjust to support a *shochet* and *bazan* at their sole expense, while every individual is benefited thereby, and ought to subscribe in proportion and in like manner as last year,—desiring that this might be put upon the minutes, and a memorandum to the same import be written on the subscription. This being agreed to, it was accordingly complied with. At the same time, it was agreed that the subscription-list be handed to all those that were not present at the meeting, and such others as have the benefit of the *shochet*.” The smallest subscription received was from Isaac Ximenes, six-pence; the largest, from Mr. Aaron Syefort, ten pounds, ten shillings.

At this same meeting was passed a resolution to elect a trustee for the archives, deeds, papers, etc.

The election resulted in Mr. Manuel Josephson receiving five votes, Mr. Samuel Hays three votes, and Mr. Moses Nathan one. Mr. Josephson was declared elected, and it was afterward resolved that the deed of the land on which the synagogue was built should remain in the possession of Jonas Phillips, Esq., until the debt due to Mr. Robert Wahn should be discharged, and then it also should be handed to the trustee.

At a meeting of the Congregation held in the same year, on a day corresponding to July 19th, present Solomon Lyon, Benjamin Nones, Samuel Hays and Myer Hart, the *segan* informed the meeting that as the burying-ground had been opened several times, and wishing to remedy the evil, a person was willing to build a habitation near it at his own expense, and that he would use his endeavors to hinder such depredations in future; and wished their opinion, if the said person might build the said dwelling and occupy it for a space of seven years. The sense of the Congregation being taken, it was resolved "that the *segan* should have power to let the same on such terms and agreement as he shall think proper for the safety of said burying-place, by such writing as shall be necessary, with

the provision that should any tax accrue on account of such building the same shall be paid by the person occupying the same."

There is a tradition that the British, when occupying Philadelphia, shot deserters at the gates of the Jewish graveyard, a custom that remained in Europe as late as 1813.

The subscriptions were still insufficient, and an effort was made to gain assistance from abroad. A letter directed to the Han Parnasim and Gabay of the K. K. Ash Kanesim (the German synagogue), in Paramaraibo, Surinam, shows the date of the transaction, which was the 18th Adar, A. M. 5550 (February 24th, 1790). In this letter they give a full statement of their finances, and say that the removal of so many of their fellow-members to their old homes, after peace was declared, left a mere handful of the original members to supply the funds necessary to carry on the Congregation. The letter is signed: "Barnard Gratz, president; Mannel Josephson, trustee."

On April 6th, 1790, the Legislature passed an act to allow the Hebrew Congregation to raise eight

hundred pounds sterling by lottery. The managers were Manuel Josephson, Solomon Lyon, William Wistar, John Duffield, Samuel Hays and Solomon Etting. Messrs. Wistar and Duffield were not Israelites, but were placed among the trustees, probably to give the project some influence with members of other denominations. The object of the law, it was stated, was to enable the Jews to redeem from mortgage and incumbrance their house of public worship. This lottery was successful. It was conducted on a plan somewhat novel, there being no blanks, every ticket receiving a prize.

Upon the accession of President Washington, the Hebrew congregations of Philadelphia, New York, Charleston and Richmond presented him with a formal address, which received a suitable reply. It was signed and dated: "Manuel Josephson, for and in behalf, and under the authority, of the several congregations aforesaid. Philadelphia, December 13th, 1796."

During the Revolutionary War, there was living in Carter's Alley, below Third Street, a Mr. Israel Israel, who was burned out, and who removed to another part of the city. The site has been a

peculiarly unfortunate one, fires having occurred there no less than four times. Israel Israel was at one time High Sheriff of Philadelphia. His wife was Hannah Erwin.

Mr. Lossing, in his "Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution," tells this story: "On the evening after the battle (of the Brandywine), the whole country was in a state of terror, and while the victorious Britons were on their march to Philadelphia all lower Pennsylvania and Delaware were eminent for the loyalty of their inhabitants. There were, however, noble exceptions. The patriotism of the Israels and the bold heroism of Hannah Erwin Israel will never be forgotten. Israel Israel was a member of the Committee of Safety, and, of course, a marked man. Betrayed by his Tory neighbors, he and his wife's brother were made prisoners and taken upon the frigate 'Roebuck,' lying in the Delaware, in sight of his house, for trial. He was treated harshly; his bed was a coil of ropes on deck; his food of the meanest kind. It was reported that he had declared that he would 'sooner drive his cattle as a present to General Washington, than receive thousands of dollars in British gold for them.' On being informed of this, the British commander

ordered a detachment of soldiers to go to his (Israel's,) meadows in full view, and seize and slaughter his cattle then feeding there. His young wife (then only nineteen years old,) saw her husband and brother taken to the frigate, and she also saw the movements of the plunderers. She guessed their purpose when she saw the soldiers land. With a boy eight years old, she hastened to the meadows, cast down the bars, and began driving out the cattle. The soldiers told her to desist, and threatened to shoot her. "Fire away!" cried the heroic woman. They fired, and the balls flew thickly, but harmlessly, around her. The shield of God's providence was over her, and, though the cowardly soldiers fired several shots, not one grazed her. The cattle were all saved, and the discomfited marauders returned to the frigate. The trial of Israel took place. A kind-hearted soldier asked him if he was a Freemason. He answered in the affirmative, and was informed that a lodge was to be held on board the vessel that night, the officers being Masons. The trial ended. The life of Israel was in jeopardy. He made a manly defence before the court, and when opportunity offered he gave a sign of the brotherhood. It was recognized; the haughty bearing of the officers was changed to kindness; the



Tory witnesses were reprimanded for seeking the harm of an honorable man : presents were prepared for his heroic wife, and himself and brother were sent on shore in a splendid barge, and set at liberty. The records of the Grand Lodge of Masons of Pennsylvania bear testimony that Mr. Israel (who was at one time Grand Master,) was saved from an ignominious death by the use of Masonic signs."

Mr. Israel died in 1821, aged seventy-eight years. His brother, Joseph Israel, was in the Continental army.

His daughter, Mrs. Ellet, in her "Women of the Revolution," gives quite an interesting biography of her mother, under the article entitled "Hannah Erwin Israel."









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